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OCCUPATIONAL

Health & Safety

MAGAZINE

Stepping Up TO THE Plate

THE INDIVIDUAL WORKER'S CONTRIBUTION TO WORKPLACE SAFETY

Workplace Health & Safety Web site: www.whs.gov.ab.ca

Will the Real Safety Leaders Please Stand Up?

Growing a strong safety culture starts with you

by Kevin Walker

If you are a safety professional, when you've finished reading this article please hand it on to the real safety leaders in your organization – the foremen, supervisors, department managers, plant managers and site superintendents. It is these people who determine the success or failure of a health and safety program, whether they know it or not.

I am not saying that the work of safety professionals is not valuable. It is. But, in any organization, the people who are truly responsible for safety are the same people who are responsible for production, quality, cost, schedules, rewards, recognition, promotion and discipline.

That's because every interaction between supervisors or managers and the workers on the floor helps to determine what the workers believe about the role of safety in their organization. Are the workers truly empowered to do every task safely? Or do they believe that the only way to stay employed and be recognized is to get the job done quickly and cost effectively?

For true safety leaders, the priority given to safety is not subject to change. It is a value that complements quality, cost and productivity. True safety leaders understand that embracing safety as a value creates an environment where people are motivated to excel and reach every business goal – without ever putting themselves at risk for injury.

So what can you do to establish safety as a value in your organization?

Start with yourself. Nothing torpedoes a safety culture faster than insincerity, lack of integrity and false advertising. If safety really is a value, you will be true to it every time. If you can you look at yourself in the mirror and honestly say, "The only way we do things is the safe way," then you're ready to interact with the people who have their hands on the tools or are operating the machinery.

- When troubleshooting a problem, your first question is not, "How long will this take?" Instead, you ask, "What are the safety hazards in this operation and how can they be controlled?"
- When you find a bottleneck in your construction schedule, you don't immediately say, "Find a way to get back on schedule – I don't care how you do it!" Your first question is, "How can we safely get back on schedule?"
- When you have a record production month, before planning to hand out rewards and recognition you first ask, "Did we do this safely?"
- When a key piece of equipment breaks down on Friday afternoon, your first question is not, "How much is this going to cost?" You have the discipline to first ask, "How can we safely fix this?"
- Most importantly, you care about the people who work for you. If you spot a safety risk, your first comment is not, "You're violating our safety procedure!" Rather, your swift and certain response is always, "I don't want you to get hurt. Is there a way we can control this hazard?"
- When the only way is the safe way, the emphasis is always on how things are done rather than just the end result. You stop relying on luck. You take time to coach people to do tasks the safe way.

The safe road is not always an easy road. You'll need to back up your conviction with resources: time, money and expertise. And a strong safety culture does not develop overnight.

In places where safety has not been valued in the past, many workers will say that the tiger cannot change his stripes. They may think the new approach is just some aberration in leadership behaviour brought on by the latest safety conference or corporate intervention. The only way to overcome such attitudes is through consistent adherence to safety as a value. As Stephen Covey says, "You cannot talk yourself out of a problem that you behaved yourself into."

There's just one path to an injury-free workplace where people are motivated to reach business goals. You must begin with your own behaviour, which must be consistent with your values today, tomorrow and every day that follows.

Kevin Walker, wood processing manager for Weyerhaeuser's Grande Prairie pulp mill, has led or supported many corporate and industry initiatives designed to promote health and safety in the workplace.

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Letters to the editor. We welcome response to articles or information published in this magazine, as well as suggestions for future articles. We will print letters to the editor as space permits. The editor reserves the right to edit letters.

How to contact us

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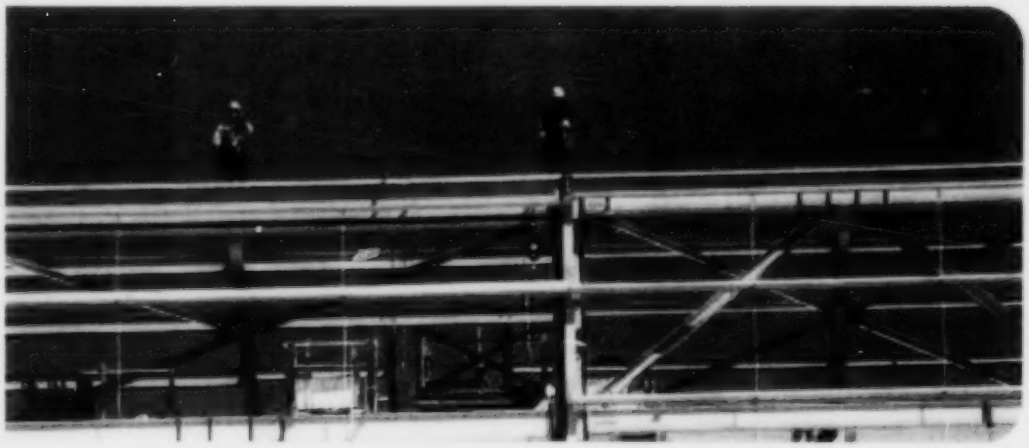

Hundreds of Genesee Phase 3 workers are busy at different levels of the vast boilerhouse structure. They are all tied off when more than two meters off the ground, and all tools, equipment and supplies are secured so they can't fall. Image courtesy of Fred Hutchinson, EPCOR

EPCOR achieves

MAJOR SAFETY MILESTONE

On July 9, 2003, the Genesee Phase 3 power project recorded one million hours of construction activity without a lost-time injury. The $695 million project, a joint venture of EPCOR and TransAlta, is one of Alberta's largest capital projects: it involves more than 800 tradespersons and contractors represented by 16 different unions.

Human Resources and Employment Minister Clint Dunford spoke at an official celebration of this important milestone, stating that the project is an outstanding example of cooperation among managers, workers on the site, corporate leaders and unions.

For more information call Jay Shukin, EPCOR, at (780) 412-8877.

FIGHT the BITE

campaign educates Albertans about West Nile virus

Although the risk of contracting West Nile virus is low, people who work outdoors are becoming more concerned about being bitten by mosquitoes. An Alberta Health and Wellness campaign called Fight the Bite provides these and other simple tips on avoiding mosquito bites:

- Use an insect repellent containing DEET.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear light-coloured clothing, which is less attractive to mosquitoes.

For more information about the Fight the Bite campaign, go to **www.health.gov.ab.ca/healthier/diseases/west_nile.html**. *See also the Workers and West Nile Virus Safety Bulletin (GH013), at* **www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/pdf/GH013.pdf**.

Alberta sets record low workplace injury rate

Alberta workers sustained 3.0 serious injuries per 100 full-time jobs in 2002. Human Resources and Employment Minister Clint Dunford stated that the 2002 rate is encouraging, in that it is the lowest since the current system of measurement was established in 1991. However, under the new Work Safe Alberta initiative, the goal for 2004 is a rate of 2.0.

LifeQuilt dedicated to young Canadian workers

A large quilt mural known as the LifeQuilt was formally dedicated in Toronto on May 1, 2003. This quilt features images of 100 young workers from across Canada (six from Alberta) who were killed on the job, as well as the names of numerous other young workers who have been seriously injured in the workplace.

The purpose of the LifeQuilt (which was created by Toronto artist Laurie Swim with the help of many community volunteers) is to honour the lives of young workers whose deaths could have been prevented, and to raise awareness of this issue by presenting the humanity behind the statistics.

For more information and/or to find out how you can support this project, go to **www.youngworkerquilt.ca**.

Federal government legislates safety in the workplace

Federal legislation introduced in June 2003 holds corporations criminally responsible if they fail to provide a safe work environment. The bill requires employers to take "reasonable measures" to protect workers from physical injury or harm. Failure to uphold these responsibilities could result in fines of up to $1 million.

Justice Minister Martin Cauchon said that this move is in direct response to the 1992 Westray Mine disaster, in which 26 coal miners died after an explosion in the mine.

The proposed legislation also gives employees the right to be informed about hazards in the workplace, the right to participate in correcting these hazards and the right to refuse dangerous work.

For more information, go to **http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/news/nr/2003/doc_30922.html**.

ALBERTA HEALTH & SAFETY Conference and Trade Fair

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A SAFER WORKPLACE

Host: Health & Safety Conference Society of Alberta

November 24 to 27, 2003

Telus Convention Centre, Calgary

This second annual conference, which is expected to attract in excess of 750 attendees, will feature more than 40 educational presentations and approximately 100 trade fair exhibits.

For information contact Ed Corson at (403) 275-0538, **edcorson@telus.net** *or Dianne Paulson at 1-800-661-2272,* **dpaulson@acsa-safety.org**.

Health & Safety Conference Society of Alberta

Business Case for Active Living at Work

The Business Case for Active Living at Work, developed by Health Canada and the Canadian Council for Health and Active Living at Work, outlines the benefits of encouraging physical activity in the workplace.

These are some of the points made in this Internet resource:

- 15 million Canadians spend one half of their waking hours at work. Many of these workers report difficulty in finding time for exercise.
- Health Canada's *Population Health Survey* (1996-97) shows that those who are sedentary at work are also sedentary at home.
- Because Canada's workforce is aging, benefit costs and absenteeism will likely escalate if older workers do not increase their physical activity levels.
- Increasingly, employers are finding that providing support for physical activity in the workplace can help with the recruitment and retention of employees.
- Workers report that physical activity is a good way to reduce stress.

Research indicates that the cost to organizations of having physically inactive employees may include increased employee benefit costs, reduced productivity, decreased employee satisfaction, increased absenteeism, increased short and long-term disability payments, and increased levels of workers' compensation. Fatigue, inattention and accidents are also more common among inactive employees.

For more information, visit **www.activelivingatwork.com**.

by Allan Sheppard

Safety Excellence YOU GOTTA HAVE A SYSTEM

Since December 2000, safety performance at Weldwood of Canada Limited's 14 western Canadian forest products operations has improved dramatically. "Our medical incident rate has improved by 38 per cent, while our lost workday incident rate has improved by 83 per cent," says Scott Carnahan, Weldwood's occupational health and safety manager.

In Weldwood's five Alberta operations (three in Hinton, one at Sundre and one at Strachan, near Rocky Mountain House), the improvement in incident rates is even better: 54 per cent for medical incidents and 87 per cent for lost workday incidents.

"Weldwood has always had a good safety record relative to Canadian forest industry standards," says Carnahan, who attributes the company's improvement in safety performance to "a systems-based approach to managing safety."

It is Carnahan's job to implement a formal safety management system for Weldwood, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of International Paper that employs about 3,400 people. Carnahan's definition of a safety system is simple and clear. "A safety system is the document that defines responsibilities for the who, what, where, when and how often of safety management." As he speaks, Carnahan emphasizes two words: *document* and *responsibilities*. A safety system must be written down, and it must say who is accountable for results.

Weldwood's safety system has six components: management involvement and support, employee involvement, standards and practices, training, inspection and maintenance programs, and failure analysis and feedback (see sidebar, page 7). All are important, but Carnahan believes two of them are critical: management involvement and support, and employee involvement. "Management has to send a message and back it up," says Carnahan. "Management has to model the behaviours it expects, and take action to make sure everyone follows the model."

The key to effective employee involvement, says Carnahan, is to make it "meaningful." Weldwood's safety system has employees at the scene playing key roles in vital safety procedures – job hazard analyses, safety and housekeeping inspections, problem-solving groups, incident investigations, emergency response teams and peer observations.

"A safety system is the document that defines responsibilities for the who, what, where, when and how often of safety management."

"It's what you see in the safety pyramid," Carnahan points out (see accompanying figure). Meaningful employer and employee involvement are foundation values that support the management structures to maintain effective safety programs.

Ward Lerach (Sundre) and Gerry Sadek (Strachan) help put Weldwood's safety system into practice on the shop floor. As hourly safety representatives, they work with fellow hourly workers in all aspects of Weldwood's safety program. Sadek, who has worked at Strachan for eight years, says International Paper has brought a renewed "focus on where safety can go and should go."

Among the many changes, workers are not afraid to report safety hazards. "We have a great near miss reporting system," says Sadek. "Workers are confident that, if they report something, it will be fixed – or they will get an explanation why it can't be done." Sadek and Lerach agree that getting that kind of response is the key to successful employee involvement in safety programs.

"We want hourly employees active and engaged in our process," says Lerach. "We want them to be and feel involved."

Have they been successful? "Absolutely," Lerach responds. But he offers a note of caution: people will resist too much change, even when they want it. Communication is therefore an important and necessary tool for managing change in a safety program.

Carnahan also has a cautionary note. "While these results are impressive, our current medical incident rate is nearly twice that of our sister business units in International Paper. We need to stay focused and keep working our safety systems."

"Safety performance is a pretty good predictor of management performance in other key business areas," Carnahan adds. In other words, a safe shop is likely to be a profitable shop.

Iain Campbell agrees. Campbell, a consultant in the Partnerships in Health and Safety program at Alberta

SAFETY PYRAMID: Successful safety systems rest on a foundation of values. These values support management systems that identify and take corrective action on at-risk behaviours, near miss incidents and first aid cases before they can escalate to medical incidents and serious injuries.

Source: Managing the Safety Process, Weldwood of Canada

Human Resources and Employment, says that the impact of an effective safety system on the bottom line is easy to see in Alberta. He points to incentives like the Partnerships in Injury Reduction program at the Workers' Compensation Board-Alberta, which offers significant discounts on WCB premiums to employers that have a Certificate of Recognition.

The Partnerships program (see page 19) can also advise employers and help them develop safety systems. This opportunity is especially helpful for small employers who cannot hire a safety manager like Scott Carnahan.

Allan Sheppard is a freelance writer and researcher who lives in Edmonton.

Resources

WEB LINKS

www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/partners/hsms_faq.asp
Health and Safety Management System FAQs

www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/partners/publications/pdf/building.pdf
WHS publication, "Building an Effective Health and Safety Management System"

www.wcb.ab.ca/news/2003/030522.asp
WCB's Partnerships in Injury Reduction program

www.safetycodes.ab.ca
Alberta Safety Codes Council

www.canoshweb.org/en/programs.html
Canadian National Occupational Health and Safety

IN THE ALBERTA GOVERNMENT LIBRARY – LABOUR BUILDING

Videos

Too Close for Comfort: Near-Miss Reporting, 13 min.
Proper reporting and investigation of near miss incidents can enhance safety – if organizations act on the recommendations arising from investigations. (VC 0360)

Understanding Hazards and Risks, 20 min.
The factors involved in making a workplace health and safety strategy a success. (VC 0346)

Factors Contributing to Safety Excellence

(Adapted and condensed from a Weldwood of Canada Limited document.)

Management Involvement and Support

- Establish site-specific annual health and safety objectives
- Set annual objectives for each level of management, with annual performance appraisals
- Model the expected behaviours
- Consistently enforce rules and procedures
- Designate a safety coordinator
- Establish a planning process for corrective actions
- Conduct annual safety program self-assessments

Employee Involvement

- Organize safety committees to create ownership of safety processes
- Provide meaningful ways for employees to be engaged in the safety process
- Conduct monthly crew safety meetings
- Establish a formal notification system for employees to report hazards or concerns

Standards and Practices

- Conduct risk assessments (such as job hazard analyses) and set priorities for eliminating hazards
- Develop and maintain written safety and industrial hygiene programs
- Have a system to set priorities for safety work orders and track them to completion

Training

- Set up an orientation process for new hires
- Develop a curriculum to support company and regulatory training requirements
- Have a process to ensure that employees and managers maintain competence in critical safety skills

Inspection and Maintenance Program

- Implement a formal, monthly safety inspection process for the entire facility – with hazard recognition training for employees and a system to track hazards until they are eliminated

Failure Analysis and Feedback

- Set up a formal investigation process for medical incidents and other significant events
- Track incident investigation corrective actions to completion
- Regularly analyze incident data to identify trends
- Have a process for investigating near miss incidents

by Allan Sheppard

Safety Excellence

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Supporting

Steeplejack supervisors celebrating the successful completion of their Construction Safety Officer training, May 2003. Image courtesy of the ACSA.

"Safety is good business, and supervisors are the main cogs in the wheel. I can write all the memos I want and preach from the mountain, but that won't get the job done. Only the supervisors – the guys in the field – can do that."

The speaker is Duane Mather, President and CEO of Nabors Canada and chairman of the board of the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors, but many senior managers in dozens of industries across Alberta echo Mather's sentiments. There's widespread recognition that supervisors in the field are pivotal; they can make or break a safety program. Unfortunately, it's also widely recognized that some workers are reluctant to take on a supervisory role because of the many challenges involved, particularly regarding safety issues.

Robin Kotyk, manager for the Alberta Construction Safety Association's north region, says his industry, like others, realizes it must clearly delineate supervisors' roles and responsibilities. "Twenty years ago," says Kotyk, "we'd offer someone a dime more an hour to be a foreman and he'd take the job, no questions asked. Now, as employers, it's our responsibility to tell supervisors exactly what they'll be doing."

That task is complicated, though, since the Occupational Health and Safety Act currently refers only to Employers and Workers.

> "There's widespread recognition that supervisors in the field are pivotal; they can make or break a safety program."

So how do employers make potential supervisors more comfortable with their safety responsibilities?

Training

Steeplejack Industrial Group, an Edmonton-based plant maintenance contractor, is a strong supporter of training. Ran Newby, the company's vice-president of administration and quality, says, "If you just hand the supervisor a book and tell him to read it, you as an employer haven't done your job."

That's why Steeplejack has begun sending its core supervisory staff to the ACSA's Construction Safety Officer program, which covers topics such as workplace hazardous materials, confined space awareness, principles of health and safety management, construction safety training and construction safety administration. The intent is to make supervisors more comfortable and efficient on the job by providing formal safety training and information to complement their field experience.

By the end of 2003, all of Steeplejack's 40 full-time supervisors will have completed the program. Newby estimates it costs Steeplejack between $2,200 and $2,400 for each supervisor who completes the course. In turn, supervisors volunteer 100 hours of their own time on evenings and weekends. Newby says the company has "had no difficulty" in getting supervisors to take the course because the training not only increases their comfort level on their existing job but also makes them more employable should they change jobs.

YOUR SUPERVISORS

by Norma Ramage

The program is too new for there to be solid statistical data on its impact on safety performance. Even so, Newby says, "There's no question that it will lower our recordable injury rates."

One company that has figures to prove the success of its training program for supervisors is Precision Drilling. Steve James, vice-president of health, safety and environment for Precision's Contract Drilling Division, believes a program for supervisors introduced in 2002 and focusing on communication has been a major factor in reducing the division's reportable incident rate by 40 per cent from 2001 to 2002.

Precision's intensive two-day workshop offers training in effective communication techniques, breaking down barriers to communication, listening skills, positive reinforcement and behaviour analysis. "We train our supervisors on the equipment, the processes and the regulations, but we introduced this program because we concluded that there's one overriding skill we need to give them, and that's the ability to deal with the people side of supervising." James adds, "Once we understand the policies, procedures and work behaviours needed to work safely, we need to communicate those expectations."

Kotyk mentions two other ACSA programs for supervisors. Leadership for Safety Excellence, one of their most popular programs, offers modules on the role and responsibilities of supervisors, inspection of a building site and how to carry out on-the-job training. The Ride Along program, introduced in April 2003, is intended to give site supervisors a better idea of their responsibilities in working with subcontractors. "One of our Small Employer Advisors rides along with one or more supervisors of housing sites to point out safety concerns and suggest how to rectify them," Kotyk says.

> "Training and overall safety policy aren't effective unless they're supported by top-level management."

Strong safety policies

Steeplejack's Newby says his company takes the time to ensure that its supervisors fully understand the company's policies and procedures. "We want them to understand that our policies aren't radical. They're tried and tested methods, and there are reasons for all of them. Once they understand that, they're better equipped to work with the front line employees to push those programs."

Supervisors also need to know that a company's policies are "living, breathing documents, not something that hasn't been revised since 1988," says Newby.

Support from senior management

There's also wide-ranging agreement across industries that training and overall safety policy aren't effective unless they're supported by top-level management. And supervisors have to know that support is there. Mather says it's critical that senior executives take time to go into the field to show their support for supervisory staff. That's why three years ago Nabors Canada and "half a

dozen" other oil and gas companies started a program that encouraged presidents and other top executives to spend time in the field talking up safety. The next year, 30 companies joined the program. This year there are 70.

Mather believes there's one other tool companies in his industry can offer their supervisors, and that's reducing "the paper mountain." Mather comments, "The one complaint I hear most across this industry is that the paperwork doesn't leave them time to actually coach and train. We have to find a way to give them time to be more proactive."

Norma Ramage is a freelance writer and communications consultant living in Calgary.

Resources

WEB LINKS

http://safety.kirtland.af.mil/AFSC/RDBMS/Ground/feedback/articles/10comm.doc
Ten Commandments of Safety for Supervisors

www-ehs.ucsd.edu/office/super.htm
University of California, San Diego, "If You Are a Supervisor, A Commitment to Safety"

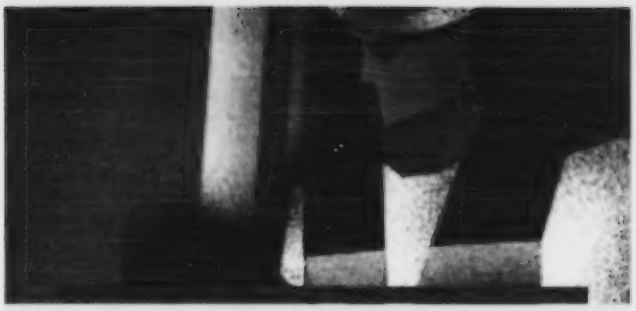
http://safety1st.gsfc.nasa.gov/supsafetytrainingguide.doc
Supervisor's Guide to Safety Training

IN THE ALBERTA GOVERNMENT LIBRARY – LABOUR BUILDING

Videos

Supervising Safety – You Make the Difference, 19 min.
Factors that influence incidents and techniques supervisors can use to change employees' behaviour. (VC 0054)

Workplace Safety: Everybody's Business, 23 min.
Ideal for both new employee orientation and as a refresher for veteran employees, this video includes an overview of safety responsibilities along with specific training in certain areas. (VC 0197)



CONSIDERING A SUPERVISORY POSITION?

Anyone thinking of becoming a supervisor has the right to ask his/her employer for information. Although the questions to ask employers vary with the job and the industry, some or all of the following questions suggested by the people interviewed for this article could be applicable.

1. At what level is the company safety program administered? Says Mather, "I wouldn't want to be a supervisor for a company that has the attitude that safety is solely the safety department's responsibility. It should be a corporate philosophy that comes from the top."
2. What kind of training is offered for supervisors? Ask to see a copy of the training manual. And ask about the timing of the training – whether it's offered immediately, and whether the company offers regular upgrades and refresher courses.
3. What training is given to the workers you will supervise? Ask to see a copy of that safety program and check to see whether it has had a recent update.
4. Does the company have a safety incentive program? Newby says the presence of incentives likely indicates that the company takes safety seriously.
5. What happens in the event of an incident? What are the supervisor's responsibilities? To what level is an incident investigated?
6. Is there a job description that clearly outlines the role and responsibilities of the supervisor in terms of health, safety and environment? Says Kotyk, "Ask yourself why you want to do this job, and ask the employer exactly what your responsibilities will be."

CHOOSE SAFE NOT SORRY.

Copies of the Work Safe Alberta tabloid available

To order additional copies of the "Choose Safe Not Sorry" publication (the one with the coffin on the back cover!), call the Workplace Health & Safety Call Centre (toll-free) at 1-866-415-8690. This document is also available in pdf format at www.whs.gov.ab.ca.

MSI and the Stages of Injury

by Ray Cislo

Musculoskeletal injuries, or MSIs, go by many different names, including repetitive strain injuries, repetitive motion injuries and cumulative trauma disorders. Whatever the term used, the effect is the same: bones, joints, ligaments, tendons, muscles and other soft tissues are being injured.

MSIs also have some more familiar names. Tennis elbow is an MSI that can result from the repetitive swinging of a tennis racquet or from other repetitive arm movements similar to those used by tennis players. Other MSIs have similar names that indicate the type of work being done, for example, carpet layer's knee, letter carrier's shoulder and pizza cutter's wrist. MSIs also have medical names such as carpal tunnel syndrome, thoracic outlet syndrome and tendonitis.

Hidden injury, hidden costs

MSIs don't kill workers, but they can have a devastating impact on their lives and livelihoods. A worker in pain loses the ability to concentrate; consequently, both the quality of the work and productivity are reduced. A worker with muscle weakness may struggle to perform manual tasks or may not be able to perform them at all. A worker with damaged nerves loses accuracy in fine manipulative work, becomes clumsy and inaccurate, and may not respond quickly to danger. Workers with restricted movement cannot complete tasks or can complete them only by putting their bodies into awkward positions – positions that can cause additional problems.

At the end of the workday, the worker takes these problems home. Pain, weakness, sensory loss due to nerve damage and limited movement can interfere with family responsibilities and relationships. The worker may not be able to prepare meals, maintain a clean home, perform household maintenance or enjoy hobbies. Parents may lose the ability to hold and hug their children. These physical limitations can lead to emotional stress, damaged relationships and loss of self-worth.

Physical symptoms

The physical symptoms of MSIs may include any, some or all of the following: sharp pains, dull aches, tingling or numbness due to compressed nerves, burning sensations, swelling, redness, tenderness to the touch and pain when the affected body part is moved. In many if not most cases, how the injury happened and the exact tissues that were injured are unknown. This is what makes MSIs – particularly those related to repetitive motion and overuse – so difficult to diagnose and treat.

Warning signs

Don't allow yourself, a loved one or one of your employees to get to Stage 3 of an injury (see sidebar). If you're already in Stage 2, get help immediately. See a doctor, physiotherapist, ergonomist, acupuncturist or other health care provider. Make sure the person you consult thoroughly understands how you work so he or she can determine what might be happening and help you return to normal.

Stages of injury

Most workers affected by MSIs do not realize that if they do nothing to correct their problem they may be headed for increasing, and potentially devastating, discomfort and disability. There are three stages of injury.

Stage 1

- Discomfort may persist for weeks or months but is reversible.
- Most workers experience pain and weakness during work activities but improve on days away from work.
- Interference with work tasks is minimal.

Stage 2

- Discomfort may persist for months.
- Symptoms begin more quickly and last longer.
- Physical signs may be present, and sleep may be disturbed.
- Work tasks may be difficult to perform.

Stage 3

- Discomfort may persist for months or years.
- Symptoms are always present, even at rest.
- Activities of daily living are disrupted, and sleep is disturbed.
- The person is unable to perform light duties at work.
- The likelihood of recovery is poor.

Ray Cislo, P.Eng., B.Sc. (H.K.), is a safety engineering specialist at Workplace Policy and Standards, Alberta Human Resources and Employment.

Resources

WEB LINKS

www.tifaq.com/information/supportgroups.html
RSI Support/Injured Worker Groups

www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/bulletins.asp#erg
Safety Bulletins on MSIs and ergonomics

www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/bulletins.asp#back
Safety Bulletins on back care and lifting

Stepping Up TO THE Plate

THE INDIVIDUAL WORKER'S CONTRIBUTION TO WORKPLACE SAFETY

by Bill Corbett

As spelled out in legislation, a worker's responsibility for safety in Alberta is fairly straightforward. The Occupational Health and Safety Act requires employees to work safely and cooperate with employers to protect themselves and their co-workers.

But this bare bones requirement should only be a starting point. Safety is everyone's business, and individual workers who go beyond the minimum requirements play an important role in creating a safer workplace for everyone.

Assuming more responsibility for safety makes obvious sense for workers. They are the ones at risk of injury if the work site isn't safe or shortcuts are taken in performing the job. They are also the ones on the front line and thus often the best able to identify risks. "A lot of our hazard assessment is done by the people doing the job. They're the best qualified to do it," says John Palmateer, an instrumentation technician at Alberta Newsprint Company's plant in Whitecourt.

Yet there is an ingrained tendency in many workers to not take that extra step, to instead assume it's their employer's job or their supervisor's job to ensure a safe workplace. "In focus group testing we did, most workers felt they had no responsibility for safety," says Dan Clarke, project manager, Work Safe Alberta Secretariat, Alberta Human Resources and Employment. "Getting them to take on more responsibility requires a bit of a cultural change."

To facilitate that shift in attitude, the Alberta government and various partners have undertaken the Work Safe Alberta initiative, which includes television and print ads aimed at individual workers. These ads encourage workers to both look out for the safety of their buddies and take a leadership role in adopting safe practices that will hopefully rub off on their co-workers.

"Assuming more responsibility for safety makes obvious sense for workers. They are the ones at risk."

Larry Cane has long been a role model in this regard. A 22-year journeyman roofer with Edmonton-based Christensen & McLean Roofing, Cane takes the initiative in inspecting the work site for hazards and ensuring that all necessary safety measures have been taken. "Superintendents and foremen like having Larry on the site," says Christensen & McLean construction safety officer Rick Ennis, "because he makes sure everything is done properly."

Once he's satisfied the job site is safe, Cane keeps a careful watch out for his co-workers, particularly those new to the job. "In roofing, you're dealing with extremely hot liquids. So if a mop bucket gets parked

behind someone, I'll let them know it's there," says Cane. "Sometimes people are also not sure how close they are to the edge of the roof, so I'll remind them."

Another example of looking out for co-workers is the Canadian Petroleum Safety Council's "Green Hands" program. Embraced by a growing number of upstream Canadian petroleum companies, the program is based on the grim reality that new workers suffer more than twice as many injuries as experienced workers. Indeed, one-third of all workplace injuries occur in the first six months on the job, and half in the first year. Under the program, workers with, say, less than six months experience are identified by a green sticker on their hard hat.

"Once you see that green sticker, it should raise a flag that you need to be looking out for that individual," says Glenn Morasch, a health and safety advisor in Calgary with BP Canada Energy Company. "When you identify a worker who is new to the job, your immediate reaction is to be more patient, more observant and more willing to help him out. It sets up an expectation of communication, coaching and mentoring." While all experienced workers should provide a helping hand to "green" employees, says Morasch, mentors should ideally be those with the time and temperament to guide fledgling workers safely through their first months on the job.

Employers can play an important role in helping their workers assume more responsibility for safety. Alberta Newsprint, for example, has no safety department, relying instead on a team approach that makes safety an integral part of doing business. Positions on safety committees are regularly rotated, so as many workers as possible are exposed to more in-depth involvement with safety on the job.

"We have an open management style," says Palmateer. "Everybody

WAYS FOR WORKERS TO CONTRIBUTE TO JOB SITE SAFETY

- Make safety as important as productivity and quality in your work.
- Before starting work on a new job, get involved in assessing the site for hazards and ask to see the site safety plan. Go over any unfamiliar safety procedures with your supervisor.
- Note any unsafe working conditions or procedures and report them to a supervisor. Remember, you are the company's on-site eyes and ears.
- Take two minutes before starting any work to consider how your actions might affect your safety and the safety of your fellow workers. Make sure your safety equipment is working properly.
- Watch out for the safety of your co-workers and let them know of any unsafe conditions.
- Enroll in safety training courses and attend company workshops and talks on safety.
- Join a company safety committee.

Working with inexperienced workers:

- Introduce yourself and offer advice or assistance.
- Encourage them to ask questions about carrying out their work safely.
- Know where they are and what they're doing, and work with them until you are satisfied the job will be carried out safely.
- Look after them and buddy up if necessary, especially in emergencies.

The Canadian Petroleum Council's "Green Hands" logo

participates in the safety program and is responsible for their part in it. As well, there are no politics around safety. If there's an accident, the investigation is done not to blame someone but to find the cause and a better way of doing things."

Perhaps most importantly, says Palmateer, company management must be committed to this team approach and provide the necessary resources to make it work. "If you want your employees to participate, they've got to feel that what they say and do matters. If they don't buy into the system, it won't work, no matter how good it is. The biggest key to safety is to walk the talk."

Bill Corbett is a Calgary writer. His updated version of Day Trips from Calgary *was published last year.*

Resources

IN THE ALBERTA GOVERNMENT LIBRARY – LABOUR BUILDING

Videos

High Impact: Staying Alive In Industry, 20 min.
Eight accident re-enactments show each employee that he or she must use acquired knowledge and training as well as a good safety attitude and sound judgment to stay alive at work. Topics include recognizing workplace hazards, using proper PPE, dangers of substance abuse and reporting the possibility of violent acts. (VC 0335)

High Impact Safety Awareness, 18 min.
The importance of making safety a personal priority, and incidents that result from common employee safety errors. (VC 0326)

Safety Attitudes: Food for Thought, 15 min.
The basics of proactive safety and the importance of taking responsibility for safety on the job. (VC 0314)

Alberta's new Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, which took effect on March 31, 2003, deals primarily with administrative and policy issues. These are the highlights of the new Regulation's requirements.

1. **Lead poisoning has been added to the list of notifiable diseases.** A physician who discovers that a worker is suffering from lead poisoning must notify the Director of Medical Services at Alberta Human Resources and Employment so the department can take action at the work site(s) involved.

   Lead poisoning is a significant workplace hazard. Exposure to excessive levels of lead is often the result of unsafe work practices or poor hygiene practices such as not washing the hands and face after working with lead and/or eating in areas contaminated with lead.

2. **Critical workplace documents must be in writing and available to affected workers.** If an employer is required by the Occupational Health and Safety Act to prepare a report or plan, or to develop or put procedures in place, the report, plan or procedures must be:

   - in writing
   - available at the work site to the workers these documents affect

   Having reports, plans, and procedures in writing proves that these documents have actually been prepared and increases the likelihood that they've been well thought out and are useful.

3. **Employers must ensure that workers carry out the safety-related duties required of them.** If the Act, a regulation or an adopted code imposes a duty on a worker, the employer must ensure that the worker performs that duty. The employer, who controls the work site and how work is done, is responsible for health and safety at the site. The new requirement explicitly states that the employer is responsible for,

HIGHLIGHTS of the New Occupational Health and Safety Regulation

and will be held accountable for, making sure that workers perform their safety-related duties.

For example, if all workers at a work site must wear hard hats, the employer must ensure that this rule is followed. A worker's refusal to comply does not relieve an employer of this responsibility. If a worker repeatedly refuses to wear a hard hat, then the employer is dealing with a worker performance issue as well as a safety issue.

4. **A worker must report any unsafe equipment to the employer.** In the past, section 16(2) of the General Safety Regulation required a worker to remove from service any unsafe equipment under his or her control. However, since accountability for health and safety and work site operations rests with the employer, the employer, not the worker, should be the one deciding what actions need to be taken. Therefore, workers are now required to make their employer aware of the unsafe equipment so that the employer can take appropriate action such as stopping work, removing or isolating the equipment or repairing the equipment.

5. **A worker must be trained in the safe operation of equipment.** The regulation now explicitly states this training requirement. The employer is responsible for determining the content and duration of that training, but it must include equipment selection, limitations on use, pre-use inspection, use of the equipment, required operator skills, basic maintenance, loading and unloading, and hazards specific to the equipment. The employer does not necessarily need to provide the training, but workers must have received the appropriate training – perhaps from a previous employer – before they operate the equipment.

6. **A blaster may lose his or her blaster's permit if he or she is found to be providing false information.** A Director of Inspection may suspend or cancel a blaster's permit if the blaster has provided false information to obtain, or help others to obtain, a blaster's permit. This requirement is intended to deter persons from providing false information, maintain the integrity of the permit system and remind all permit holders that they must take their responsibilities seriously.

7. **Written reasons must be given for the suspension or cancellation of a blaster's permit.** A Director of Inspection must provide the blaster and the blaster's employer with written reasons why the blaster's permit has been suspended or cancelled. This requirement makes the process fair and open.

8. **Holders of mining certificates must demonstrate their knowledge of occupational health and safety legislation every five years.** If they do not, their certificates will no longer be valid. This requirement is intended to ensure that certificate holders are keeping their knowledge current.

The Occupational Health and Safety Code, which will contain detailed technical requirements in support of the Act and Regulation, will be released in September 2003 and its requirements will come into effect in April 2004.

For complete information, refer to the Safety Bulletin called "Alberta's New Occupational Health and Safety Regulation – Highlights" at **www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/pdf/li021n.pdf.**

RADIATION PROTECTION REGULATION

Amendments to the Radiation Protection Regulation took effect on June 10, 2003. The new Regulation can be viewed at the Queen's Printer Web site at **www.qp.gov.ab.ca/documents/Regs/2003_182.cfm**, and a Safety Bulletin summarizing the changes is posted on the Workplace Health and Safety Web site at **www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/pdf/LI023.pdf.**

ENMAX

by Dianne Dyck and Dale Rud
adapted by Juliet Kershaw

Safety trainers and educators constantly face the challenge of making safety information exciting and interesting enough for workers to want to learn it. We have all attended safety seminars and meetings that have been incredibly boring. The usual outcome is attendance without much sustainable learning.

In 2001 Dale Rud, safety advisor at ENMAX in Calgary, decided to do something about this problem. He took safety material and built it into a game show called Rule Book Madness. Patterned after the well-known television show, *Jeopardy*, Rule Book Madness requires employees to answer questions formulated from information in the health and safety rule book. Employees were divided into teams that competed for game points. At the end of the game, the teams with the most points won valuable prizes.

Here's the story.

What to do with the rule book?

In 1999, ENMAX introduced the ENMAX Health & Safety Rule Book, an everyday health and safety reference tool for field employees and contractors. When it was first published, the rule book was introduced in a workshop to familiarize employees with its layout and contents and to explain the meaning and purpose of the rules it contained. Both the book and workshop were well received, and there was an overwhelming sense that the momentum and interest had to be continued. But how?

At the monthly safety meetings of field workers, supervisors urged their crews to review the rule book and learn the various sections, one at a time. However, employees were less than enthusiastic. Actually, it was painful. In exasperation, one of the managers exclaimed: "We need to keep this book alive. If anyone has a better idea, please let me know!"

Rud responded to the call. He began dissecting the rule book, page by page, section by section, noting key points that related to the work that ENMAX employees perform. By turning the safety information into questions, Rud created an electronic game that could be played at safety meetings – one that encouraged employees to actively thumb through the rule book in a race against time, to answer safety questions.

Like *Jeopardy*, Rule Book Madness has six category headings:

- vehicles and transport
- chemical handling
- codes of practice
- electrical work
- general rules
- office safety, accidents, injuries and first aid

To win, participants have to know the answer to the question and be able to locate the associated rule.

Makes Safety Training Fun

GAME SHOW APPROACH GETS RAVE REVIEWS

Game finals

With incentives such as cash prizes, sparks began to fly off the rule book pages. For six months, enthusiastic teams competed in games at monthly safety meetings. User awareness of the rule book and its contents steadily increased. Participating teams spent hours preparing for semi-final and final games of Rule Book Madness. Little red rule books could be seen everywhere. Employees read, discussed and argued over potential questions and answers.

On May 1, 2001, four teams went head-to-head in the final round. The air was electric as fellow employees and management geared up for a fun time. There was lots at stake. Not only would the winning team earn bragging rights, but each team player would also receive a travel voucher worth $1,000. Free pizza and giveaways (smoke detectors, a $100 door prize) offered additional incentive to attend.

What's next?

Rule Book Madness was designed to promote camaraderie, liven up safety meetings and encourage a safety-conscious culture at ENMAX – a culture that would result in fewer injuries, enhanced employee well-being and increased employee morale and productivity. "The problem with most company manuals is that they never get opened," says Rud. Rule Book Madness, however, sent workers who'd lost their manuals running to supervisors for new copies.

Not resting on his laurels, Rud soon developed a new game called Bullseye Safety to further promote knowledge of the rule book. His goal was to find out whether the information learned during the first game was sticking. "I was amazed how much the employees had retained," he says. To maintain momentum, Rud and Dianne Dyck, manager, occupational health and safety, plan to initiate something comparable to Rule Book Madness now that the new provincial regulations have been published.

"By turning the safety information into questions, Rud created an electronic game that could be played at safety meetings."

Currently, they're developing a safety contest focused on hockey.

Safety can be fun

Since learning is a dynamic process, the delivery of safety training and education must be dynamic. What works with one group may not work with another. The teaching approach has to be tailored to the audience – its level of knowledge, maturity, interests and style of learning.

To keep delivery fresh and exciting, educators and trainers need to be receptive to new ideas. Working with other safety professionals, attending conferences and courses on social and program marketing, and engaging communication specialists are ways to help companies develop the right approaches for the right target audiences.

Know and listen to your audience, and make the learning relevant and exciting so the learner enjoys the experience and remembers the intended message. In other words, make safety training fun!

The Industrial Accident Prevention Association recently completed a training audit for ENMAX Corporation. In the audit, ENMAX's safety game called **Rule Book Madness** won rave reviews.
For companies on the lookout for new ways to instill awareness of safety and safety rules at work, Rule Book Madness models creativity and innovation. The game motivates employees to go back to their safety handbooks and "really learn the material," says game developer Dale Rud.

For more information, contact Dianne Dyck, at (403) 512-3924, ddyck@enmax.com.

In a Heartbeat

LEARNING FROM TRAGEDY

by Juliet Kershaw

On a lovely fall day in 1998, 18-year-old Lyndsay Thomas was driving from Fairbanks, Alaska, to a new life in New York where she was to study music. On a northwestern Ontario highway, the gifted musician somehow lost control of her car and crashed into an oncoming tractor-trailer truck. The Trimac company truck driver did all he could to avoid the collision, but to no avail. The young woman was killed instantly.

Trimac, with the Thomas' family's blessing, decided to do what it could to turn this senseless death into a powerful learning experience. "We had the ideal opportunity to make something good come out of it," says Dorothy Robison, executive assistant to Barry Davy, Trimac senior vice-president. A video crew driving by at the time of the collision filmed the moments after the crash and subsequent police and fire crew intervention. The film footage, combined with personal accounts and reenactments, produced a video depicting the ensuing nightmare and its lesson.

No one who sees *In a Heartbeat* can fail to be moved, says Robison, who has introduced the short film on numerous occasions. It sends a message to drivers everywhere: even when you are not to blame for a collision you're involved in, the effects are traumatizing and lifelong. Imagine what those effects would be if you had to assume any responsibility for the crash. The video insists there's never a good reason to shortcut maintenance, get proper rest or ignore the speed limit. If you ever relax your vigilance, you leave yourself open to a life of self-recrimination for having injured or killed someone while you're behind the wheel.

Every Trimac employee has seen the video, and it is required viewing for all new drivers. The company has also distributed over 1,500 copies of the free video, inviting users to donate to the Lyndsay Thomas Memorial Fund that provides scholarships for a summer fine arts camp at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

A poster produced and distributed to their branches features the toy bear retrieved from the ground near Lindsay's burning car.

For a copy of In a Heartbeat, *call Dorothy Robison at (403) 298-5306.*

Juliet Kershaw is an Edmonton-based writer and editor.

Resources

WEB LINKS

www.albertasheetmetal.com/newsletter/mar01/acsa.htm
Sheetmetal Contractors Association of Alberta

http://online.compmgt.com/rps/safetytraining.htm
CompManagement Incorporated – Safety Training That Works

www.asse.org/psin2001.doc
American Society of Safety Engineering, Article Index 2001

Workplace Health & Safety (WHS)

Contact WHS any time

For occupational health and safety information and assistance, or to order Workplace Health & Safety publications, phone the Call Centre toll free at 1-866-415-8690 or go to **www.whs.gov.ab.ca**.

Sign up for WHS news

To be notified by e-mail of all new WHS Web site postings, sign up for a FREE subscription service through **www.whs.gov.ab.ca**.

OHS materials in the Alberta Government Library – Labour Building

The library houses a large selection of occupational health and safety information materials. Visit the Web site at **www.gov.ab.ca/hre/library**. Access the library catalogue at **draweb.library.ualberta.ca**.

To borrow materials, please contact your local library and make your requests through the inter-library loan process, or visit the library at:

3rd floor, 10808-99 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB T5K 0G5

Phone: (780) 427-8533 or toll-free in Alberta, 310-0000 followed by the area code and phone number.

Fax: (780) 422-0084

WHS is a program of Alberta Human Resources and Employment.

CHOOSE SAFE NOT SORRY.

Partnerships NEWS

Partnerships in HEALTH and SAFETY

Partnerships in Health and Safety is a province-wide injury prevention program sponsored cooperatively by government, labour and industry.

The Partnerships program offers:

- tools to implement a health and safety management system
- guidance in applying for a Certificate of Recognition (COR)
- the potential for premium refunds from the Workers' Compensation Board–Alberta.

For more information about the Partnerships program, call (780) 427-8842 or toll free 310-0000. Or visit us on the Web:

A new home for the Partnerships newsletter

The Partnerships newsletter, which until the spring of 2003 was mailed to Certificate of Recognition holders three times yearly, is now being published on this page.

Changes to the Partnerships team

New to the Southern Region (Calgary office):

- Perry Scott, phone (403) 297-7895
- Edward Morgan, temporarily assisting with the provincial Targeted Employer program, phone (403) 297-7873

New to the Northern Region (Edmonton office):

- Karen Kruselnicki, phone (780) 644-4688
- Iain Campbell, who has transferred from the Calgary office, phone (780) 422-4100

New Partners

Canadian Energy Pipelines Association, Calgary, and St. John Ambulance Council for Alberta, Edmonton, have recently become Partners in Health and Safety, bringing the total number of Partners to 57.

Another successful Partners General Meeting

More than 120 people attended the June 12, 2003 meeting of Partners in Health and Safety held in Calgary. As indicated by the Delegate Survey, all attendees were captivated and motivated by well-prepared presentations from both the private and public sectors.

Speakers and topics

- Minister of Human Resources and Employment Clint Dunford: an overview of the Work Safe Alberta initiative
- Shelley Ewart-Johnson, Deputy Minister, AHRE: opening remarks
- Eric Reitsma, Manager North Region, WHS Compliance: the Targeted Employer program
- Phil Wilson, Alberta Occupational Health Safety Council: preliminary findings of the recent evaluation of the Partnerships Program
- Kenn Hample, Acting Team Leader, Legislation, Policy and Technical Services: key areas of change in the Occupational Health and Safety Code
- Dan Clarke, Project Manager, Work Safe Alberta Secretariat: the activities and goals of the Work Safe Secretariat
- David Wismer, Assistant Deputy Minister, AHRE: closing remarks

Danielle Pratt of Healthy Business Inc. gave the keynote address. Her talk, entitled "The Healthy Scorecard," was about how the upstream indicators of employee capability and well-being are key drivers for high performance.

Thanks to the following people, who represented the Partners at this event and helped to make it a success:

- Master of Ceremonies Al Thurston, Senior Safety Specialist, TransCanada PipeLines Limited
- Jim Little, VP Quality and Training, Mullen Transportation Inc.
- Warren Welling, HSSD Consultant, Shell Canada Limited
- Lloyd Harman, Director, Health, Safety and Loss Control, Alberta Forest Products Association
- Grant Henneberg, Chairman of the Alberta Iron and Steel Safety Council

Attention COR holders. You did it again!

In May 2003 the Workers' Compensation Board-Alberta refunded $37 million to COR holders who were registered in their Partners in Injury Reduction program for 2002. Approximately 3700 employers who had a valid COR as of December 31, 2002, shared this record refund. This brings the three-year total PIR refund to COR holders to $74.8 million.

Overall, these COR holders are experiencing 13 per cent fewer lost time claims and 22 per cent lower WCB insurance premiums than non-participants. This means that fewer Albertans are being injured at work, and employers are adding to their bottom line by reducing insurance costs.

WHAT DRIVES

by Cheryl Mahaffy

At the leading edge, it's people first, dollars second, legislation a distant third.

Amid today's mass of competing interests, what drives a business to put safety first?

"The bottom line in Alberta is, we've got to stop hurting people," says Peter Dunfield, Syncrude Canada's senior loss management advisor. "It's really a moral, impassioned plea to do the right thing versus looking for some economic payback or just following the letter of the law."

Such people-first passion characterizes Alberta's top safety performers, observes James Wilson of the Workers' Compensation Board-Alberta audit and underwriting crew. But for many, reaching that point is an evolutionary process, he adds. "I regularly encounter employers who start off looking at safety as a cost centre with no return. They're doing it because they have to." Even so, benefits result: reduced downtime, a more stable workforce, perhaps lower insurance costs. Often, those benefits spur expanded safety efforts. As suffering declines and morale improves, the realization dawns: putting safety first is the right thing to do.

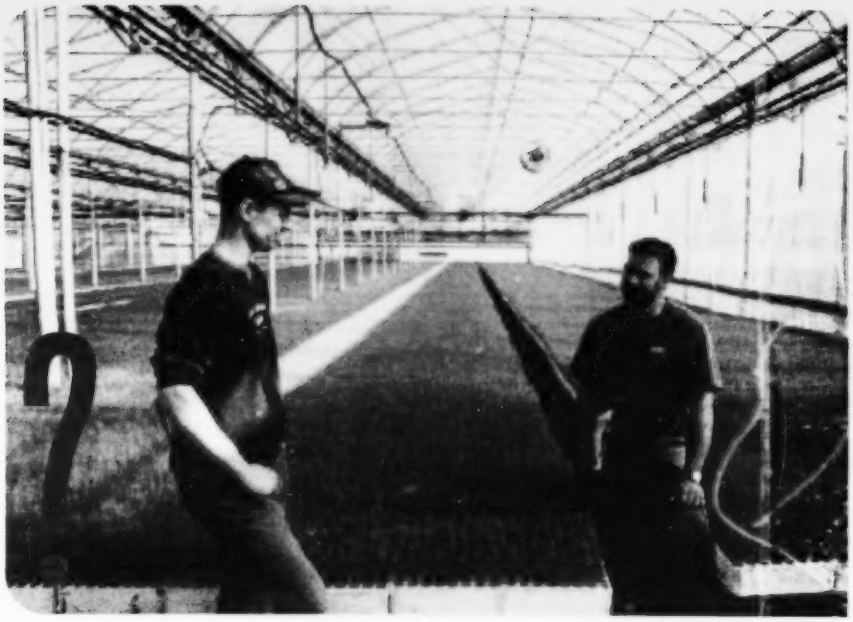
"When you're at that stage three, it permeates other parts of your business," Wilson observes. "You earn a reputation for treating everyone well, and not just because you're interested in the next sale. There's a very high success ratio of these businesses as opposed to those who just try to make a quick buck."

With 130 or more contract companies in its employ, Syncrude has ample opportunity to compare safety styles. "You can tell very quickly whether an employer is paying lip service just because the client wants it, or whether it's embedded in the culture – and not just by the incidents they have," Dunfield says. "Some companies do an exceptional job of tracking what they do to make things safe, and you can talk to people right down to the guys on the tools and come away saying, 'Wow, they believe in this.' In other companies, you'll hear, 'Safety program? Isn't that the guy with the white hat?'"

Not every enterprise moves lockstep from toeing the line to maximizing profits to believing in safety, of course. Some intuitively put safety first from day one; others catapult to that third stage through harsh experience. Case in point: Edmonton's Fred Drury. Years ago, a member of his oilfield servicing crew was killed at an Alaska well site. Although the fault wasn't his, the experience of meeting that man's widow and children remains vivid today, and it still drives safety at his Edmonton-based fan manufacturing firm. A potential hotbed for injuries with its heavy machines and super-sized blades, Flexxaire Manufacturing, Inc. has gone as long as 13 years without a lost-time incident. "You've got to give people a safe place to work," booms the burly boss. "There should be no excuses for 'injury incidents.'"

Left: Pre-job stretching at Syncrude. "A widely accepted practice in our industry," says the company's senior loss management advisor, Peter Dunfield. Image courtesy Syncrude Canada Ltd. Right: Ed Wood, Senior Grower, PRT Beaverlodge (left) and Patrick Graveley check on the crops. Image courtesy of Glenn Goodwill, PRT.

Safety 2



Employees welcome the fact that Flexxaire is a safe place to work. "He cares about us," says Product Support Manager Will Leddy, contrasting this environment with the unsafe conditions at his last foundry job. "When I come in here in the morning, I know I'm going home at night. Actually, I'm more worried about the drive in."

Not that Drury ignores the financial rewards of keeping people safe. "I can't afford to have a person off work," he'll say. Yet even his calculations put people first. When an incident ended Flexxaire's 13-year streak, it wasn't the broken record or insurance implications that concerned him most, but the year spent without the injured woman. "You can't just 'replace' a worker," he says. "The cost and time it takes to recruit and train can take months. Just do the math. An employer can't argue with me that he doesn't have the money to put in a safety program."

Yet many employers still believe safety costs more than it saves. And only concerted focus on return on investment (ROI) will convince them otherwise, argues safety consultant Kev Auty of E.A.R.A. Technologies. "Each time you ask decision makers for money, tell them what is in it for the company," he advises safety officers. "If we don't talk 'bottom line' language, we'll be left in the broom closet of idealists wanting to do the right thing, a cost centre pain in the butt."

Quantifying the ROI reaped through avoided incidents may be difficult, Auty acknowledges, but some paybacks are clear. Last year alone, Alberta firms certified under Partners in Injury Reduction shared $37 million in refunds while enjoying preferential insurance rates and other savings thanks to better-than-normal incident rates. Only 7,000 of the 117,000 Alberta businesses insured through Workers' Compensation Board-Alberta are in PIR and even fewer, Auty notes, have achieved the Certificate of Recognition, Alberta's measure of a fully implemented safety process. "That leaves more than 112,000 businesses with a huge opportunity to squeeze more value from that safety gap."

> "Doing the right thing ends up benefiting financially, too"

Among the firms recently certified is PRT Beaverlodge, part of a 14-site tree seedling nursery operation. PRT's focus on safety is driven by both altruism and economics, says Superintendent Patrick Graveley. "It's a balance. Doing the right thing ends up benefiting financially, too. The money, time and energy we put into getting the PIR certification is probably a dead heat with the cheque we got this year, but that doesn't account for spin-offs such as better morale and less retraining, which also help the bottom line. We just need to make sure everybody goes home with all their fingers and toes."

Sites such as Beaverlodge, which won PRT's President's Safety Award in 2002 and has run nearly two years without a lost-time injury, prove the economics of putting safety first, adds Regional Manager and Director of Human Resources Peter Richter from his office in Armstrong, B.C. "Our safest sites most often are our most profitable sites."

Syncrude is also well aware that its impressive safety record (0.1 lost-time injury frequency rate with over 20.6 million hours worked last year, far below the provincial average of 3.0) serves the financial bottom line. "I don't want to sound mercenary, but a number of business disruptions come with injuries," Dunfield observes. What's more, the root causes of safety incidents prove to be the culprits behind production upsets, environmental upsets and numerous other money-losing failures. That's why Syncrude has chosen to champion

safety within the larger umbrella of a corporate loss management system.

"You either come to the safety program for the right reasons, with the right mindset, or sooner or later you'll have to pay the piper," Dunfield muses. "Yet it comes back to the human side, not the least of which is the suffering that the individual and family experience." He recalls just one of the thousands, a man who lost his leg in an industrial accident. "He was almost 55 – and he can never work in the industry again. From a workplace health and safety perspective, that's bad enough, but then you get to know the individual and his wife personally and you see that not only can't he operate a crane anymore, but he will never dance with his wife again. For them, part of life is gone. As a society, we've got to stop hurting people like that."

Cheryl Mahaffy, an Edmonton writer, is co-author of Agora Borealis: Engaging in Sustainable Architecture.

Resources

WEB LINKS

www.fed.org/onlinemag/feb97/perform.html
A New (Old) Paradigm of High Performance

www.cul.co.uk/creative/cheerful.htm
Reasons to Be Cheerful

www.pwcglobal.com/Extweb/service.nsf/docid/2633017676440959CA256C690005303B
Delivering on the deal... Extracting maximum value in minimum time

www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=SPEECHES&p_id=605
National Safety Congress Address

IN THE ALBERTA GOVERNMENT LIBRARY – LABOUR BUILDING

Videos

Pro-Active Safety in Action, 15 min.
Setting up a Total Quality Safety Management program, where safety is integrated into the total organization. Also the role of management, the importance of continuous training, safety committees and job safety analysis. (VC 0279)

Web Watcher

by Bob Christie

"For profit" Web sites

WITH A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

As promised way back in January, here is a partial listing of the first 130 "for profit" sites found under "Health and Safety Canada." Clearly, there isn't space to include all the appropriate sites from the 1,510,000 (approximately) sites found by Google (my favourite search engine, at www.google.ca). You can use one of the many search engines that suit your style and begin searching for the good information you need all on your own.

The Workers Health & Safety Centre, Ontario, a for profit organization masquerading as a not-for-profit. **www.whsc.on.ca/**

Christie Communications (my company) maintains a listing of health and safety sites, but we have sort of given up trying to keep it up to date because things are changing so fast. **www.christie.ab.ca/safelist/**

Canadian Occupational Safety Magazine (published by CLB Media Inc.). **www.cos-mag.com**

Kodak Canada operates a pretty aggressive health and safety program. **wwwca.kodak.com/CA/en/corp/environment/healthSafety.jhtml**

Hatscan Hazard Alert Training, an Alberta company with national aspirations. **www.hatscan.com**

Advantage Ergonomics Canada (based in Kitchener, Ontario). **www.aecinc.ca/contactus.htm**

3M Canada, Health Safety and the Environment. **http://cms.3m.com/cms/CA/en/1-30/crirFFR/view.jhtml**

Air Products Canada Ltd. **www.airproducts.com/canada/corporate/safety.htm**

Canada Colors and Chemicals Limited Health and Safety Program. **www.canadacolors.com/canadacolors/eng/About_CCC/Health.asp**

Daltec Occupational Health Services Inc. **www.daltechealth.com**

Medisys Services Occupational Health. **www.medisys.ca/en/occupational-health-services.htm**

Dow Chemical Environment Health and Safety. **www.dow.com/facilities/namerica/canada/ehs**

Onyx Canada Health and Safety. **www.onyx-canada.com/en/about/ santesecurite.asp**

Solid Earth-Safety Consulting Services, another local company stepping out onto the national stage. **www.solidearth.ca/safety_audit.html**

Until the next time, have fun as you surf.

Bob Christie is a partner at Christie Communications Ltd., a multimedia development company in Edmonton. Bob supplies most of the Web link resources in this magazine.

Real World Solutions

What improvements have you made at your workplace? If you've found a solution worth sharing, please send it to ray.cislo@gov.ab.ca.

Hand Trolley for Transporting Rolls

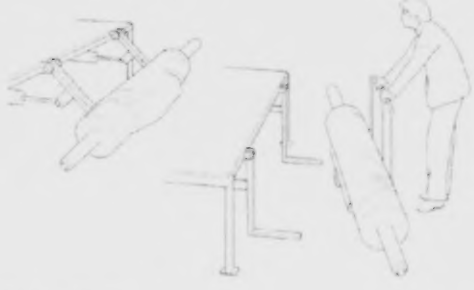
The Problem
Moving and transferring rolls or cylindrically shaped objects can be awkward and dangerous if they roll.

The Solution
A small and highly maneuverable hand trolley that is shaped to support these objects and has two load-bearing wheels in the middle and two smaller wheels at the ends.

Benefits
This solution provides for less manual handling of an awkwardly shaped load, and an almost complete elimination of the danger of the load rolling uncontrollably.

Lifting Arm for Lifting Rolls

The Problem
Lifting a large roll or cylindrically shaped object onto a raised work surface can be dangerous if the object is heavy or begins to roll.



The Solution
A lifting arm attached to the edge of the work surface. Note that the arm in the illustration is pneumatically powered.

Benefits
The chances of worker injury are reduced by less manual handling and better control over the load.

Occupational Health & Safety Magazine publishes Workplace Fatalities to remind readers of the importance of workplace health and safety.

The information is not a final investigation report. In many cases investigations are continuing. Final investigation reports are filed at the Alberta Government Library – Labour Building site and can be reviewed there or on the Workplace Health & Safety Web site at **www.whs.gov.ab.ca** under Fatalities.

An occupational fatality refers to the death of a worker caused by a work-related incident or exposure.

To protect personal privacy, the fatality descriptions do not include the names of the deceased.

Work-related incident fatalities February 2003 – May 2003

Most work-related incident fatalities that fall under provincial jurisdiction are investigated by Workplace Health & Safety. In general, highway traffic, farm, disease or heart attack fatalities are not investigated.

The following fatalities have been or are being investigated.

A 26-year-old labourer who was helping to install aluminum soffits fell 9.63 meters from an unguarded balcony that was under construction. No fall protection was being used, and the labourer had had no previous experience with this type of work.

A 37-year-old labourer was using a mini hoe to clear snow from a residential driveway. When the mini hoe ran out of diesel fuel, the worker attempted to restart the engine while sitting in the operator's seat and leaning over to connect an injector on the engine. The lever on the mini hoe's boom was accidentally activated, and the boom moved forward, pinning the worker between the boom and the engine cover.

A 63-year-old scrap dealer had dismantled a bolted tank and was lifting tank panels onto a trailer with a picker. The tank panels slipped from the grip of the plate clamp, which had worn teeth, and fell on the worker.

A 25-year-old surveyor parked on the shoulder of a main road in Nisku to check some survey stakes. While exiting the vehicle, the worker was struck by another vehicle.

A 36-year-old mobile crane operator was using a 70-ton crane to remove a 49-meter communication tower located on a farm. When the worker lifted the tower off the base and started lowering it, the crane tipped forward. The worker bailed out of the crane as it toppled, and the falling tower hit the worker.

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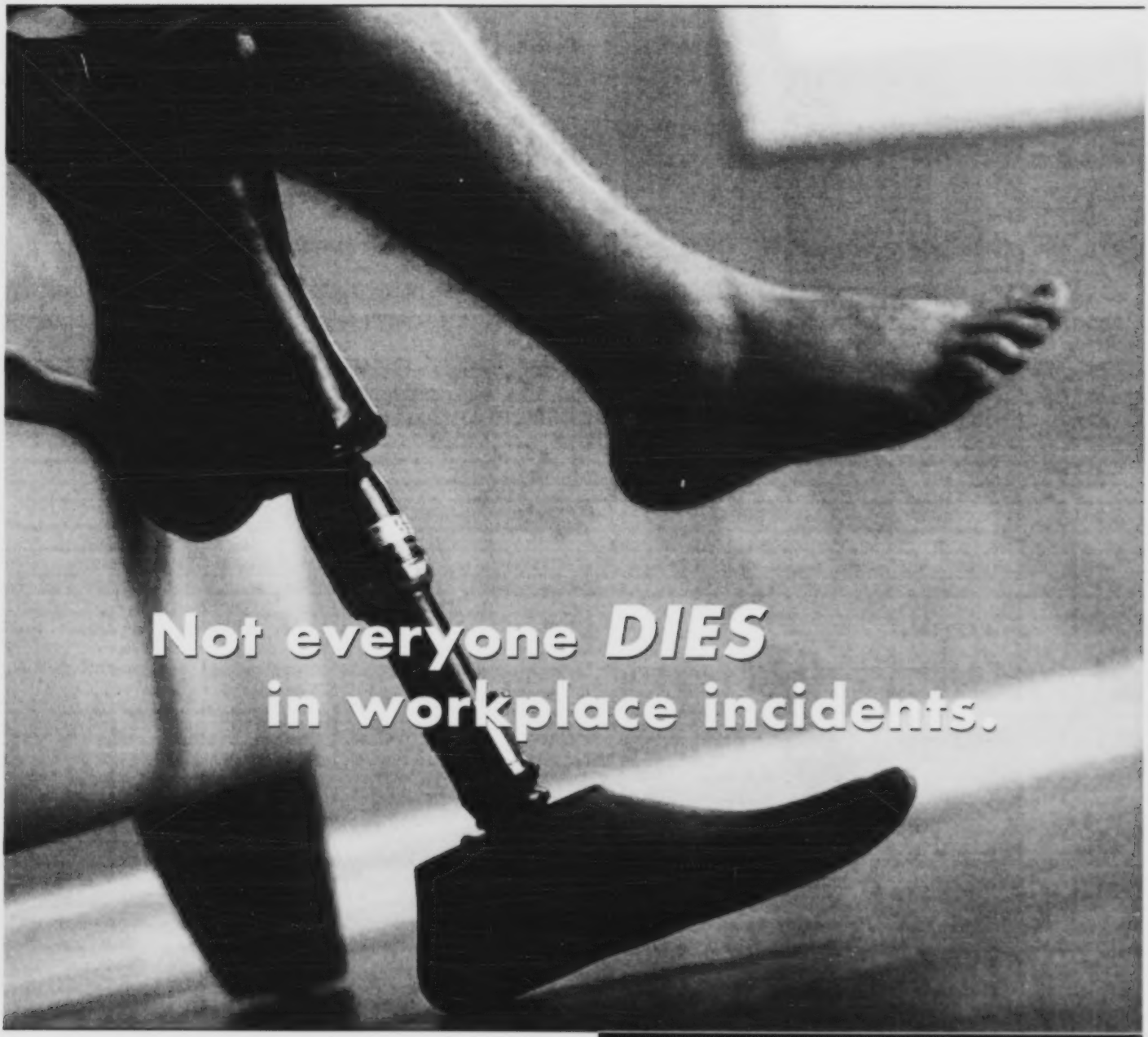
Alberta
HUMAN RESOURCES AND EMPLOYMENT
10th Floor, 7th Street Plaza - South Tower
10030 - 107 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3E4

the people & workplace department



Last year over 38,000 Albertans had their lives changed forever.
For the time it takes **make smart, safe choices.**

CHOOSE SAFE NOT SORRY.

Learn how you can make a difference. Visit **www.worksafely.org** or call the Workplace Health and Safety Call Centre (toll-free) at 1-866-415-8690.